

## [Mr. W. T. Pickett]

Life History Range lore

Dealing with [?] Nesters , early.

Gauthier, Sheldon F.

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist., #7.

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Mr. W. T. Pickett, 80, was born in Beinville Parish, La. His father, Mr. J.M. Pickett, was a school teacher who also operated a small salt works in Saline, La. The Pickett family migrated to Texas in 1863, bringing one slave with them. They settled in Robinson Co., moving a year later to Falls Co., where Mr. J. M. Pickett engaged in transporting freight. Later, the family moved to Hamilton Co., and began farming. At the age of 20, Mr. W.T. Pickett was employed on the John Snow Ranch for two years. He then secured employemnt on the Bob Shockely Ranch. Mr. W. T. Pickett discontinued ranch life in 1890 to labor at railroad construction. He married Miss Della Farrell in 1888. 11 children were born to them, seven of them now demised. They came to Ft. Worth in the early 90's, and now reside on Congress Ave. (no number) His story:

“The first money I received for labor was for working on a Hoss Ranch, which is the work I followed during the early part of my life. My name in Winifield Thomas Pickett. However, all of my acquaintances in Fort Worth know me as, “Fell” Pickett. I was born in Beinville Parish, Louisiana, February seventh, 1857. That puts my age at 80. My father was James Madison Pickett, and his vocation was teaching school. He also conducted a small salt

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works near the town of Saline, Louisiana. Father owned three slaves, among whom was one "Nigger John." I emphasize John because he was a dependable fellow. He was purchased when four years old.

"Father decided to migrate to Texas in 1863. Before moving, father sold all of his property except his personal things. He sold two of his slaves, and was offered \$2,000.00 for John. He left the matter of sale to John for decision, telling him, 'I am offered \$2,000.00 for you John. Now I am certain, that in the course of a year, you will be free by law. Shall I [sell?] you? C.12 - 2/11/41 - Tex 2 "'Keep me, Marster! Please do, Marster! Dis cullud person wants to stay wid youse always', John replied with a quavering voice and tears trickling down his cheeks. That settled the matter of John's sale, regardless of the amount offered. In the operation of the salt works, John attended to the work as though he was looking after his personal property, and father depended on John in all matters.

"The production of salt in those days was a simple matter. Water was obtained from the wells, then placed in open kettles and evaporated by heat. The major part of the salt we produced was sold in the surrounding territory. Some of it was shipped to the State of Kansas.

"My family migrated to Texas in 1863, and settled in Robinson County. The country was sparsely populated at that time. There were no railroads, and all commodities transported were hauled by ox and mule teams using wagons constructed with wooden exles.

"My father engaged in freighting for a livelihood, and traveled to Millican, Belton, Waco, and other towns. We moved to Falls County after five years, and continued the freighting business. We also attempted to develop a farm.

"Father moved to Falls County, Texas in 1868, and continued his freighting business but intended to establish a farm. We were located at a place called "Dog Town" in those days.

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"We failed to establish the farm due to objections on the part of cattlemen. We were no more than settled and beginning to clear the land when we were informed by the cattlemen that farming wasn't 3 a healthy business in that section. Father couldn't see the matter in the same light as the cattlemen did, so he continued to carry out his development. He received several purchasing offers but didn't want to sell. In fact, he was stubborn about his right to farm there. The controversy continued mild in form for four years, then one day, he was informed by an unknown person that he had better sell at a reasonable price, 'or else he would find himself without a home'. It was a kind of friendly hint. He thought the proposition over, and decided that perhaps the section wasn't a good place to farm, so he sold his farm and moved to Hamilton County in 1873. He quit the freighting business then, and devoted his time to farming . . . .